

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **A-1**

NEW YORK TIMES
10 June 1984

Bulgaria Hired Agca to Kill Pope, Report of Italian Prosecutor Says

Plot Was Effort to Weaken Solidarity Movement, Official Says in His Request for 9 Indictments

By **CLAIRE STERLING**
Special to The New York Times

BONN, June 9 — An Italian state prosecutor has filed a report in court saying that the Bulgarian secret services recruited the man who shot Pope John Paul II in 1981 in a plot to weaken the Solidarity movement in Poland.

The rise of the Solidarity labor union in Poland "and consequent social convulsions," the report says, were "perceived as a mortal danger" to Eastern Europe and were "mostly due to the fervid religious faith of the population, sustained and helped above all by the first Polish Pope in history."

These conclusions are in a 78-page report by State Prosecutor Antonio Albano, who is the equivalent of a district attorney. The report is based on some 25,000 pages of documentation gathered by Judge Ilario Martella in his investigation of the attempt to assassinate the Pope.

The report, which was filed in court May 8 and is still officially secret, asks for the indictment and trial of three Bulgarians and six Turks for conspiring to assassinate the Pope. The Turks include Mehmet Ali Agca, who has been convicted of shooting the Pope on May 13, 1981, in St. Peter's Square.

Under Italian law, the report cannot be made public until Judge Martella issues his own comprehensive report, which is expected next month, when he rules whether there is to be a trial. The Prosecutor's report is not binding on the judge, but it is based on the same material the judge will use in his report. There has been virtually no public disagreement between the Prosecutor and the judge on the case, and most people think the report faithfully reflects the judge's views.

The prosecutor's report, which has come into my possession, makes these additional points:

Although the K.G.B., the Soviet intelligence and internal security agency, is not mentioned by name, the report, speaking of the turmoil in Poland,

says "some political figure of great power took note of this most grave situation and, mindful of the vital needs of the Eastern bloc, decided it was necessary to kill Pope Wojtyla."

Mr. Agca was promised more than \$400,000 by the Bulgarians to kill the Pope but has not received it.

The man who was supposed to help Mr. Agca escape was spirited out of Italy in a sealed diplomatic truck of the Bulgarian Embassy. The truck was sent to Bulgaria under a diplomatic procedure not used before or since by the Bulgarians. Since then no one has reported seeing the man, Oral Celik, a leader of Turkey's neo-Nazi Gray Wolves and a close friend of Mr. Agca.

Mr. Agca did not start to confess until a year after the shooting. He apparently concluded that he had been abandoned by the Turks and Bulgarians who he thought would manage to obtain his freedom.

The authorities think Mr. Agca's testimony against the Turks and Bulgarians is accurate, despite his earlier lies, because such a preponderance of the details he provided have been independently confirmed in the investigation.

First Report of Findings

Although the Prosecutor's request for indictments has been reported, the broad outlines of the judge's findings are presented here for the first time.

They point to an elaborate conspiracy involving the Gray Wolves, the Sofia-based Turkish Mafia and, in the Prosecutor's words, "organs and institutions of the Bulgarian state."

The three Bulgarians facing indictment — Sergei I. Antonov, Todor S. Aivasov and Zhelyo K. Vasiliev — were all operating in Rome when the Pope was shot. They are described as "agents of the Bulgarian secret service." Evidence also shows active involvement by the Bulgarian Embassy.

The confession of Mr. Agca, the Turkish gunman, also implicated the others who face indictment — Bekir Celenk, Omer Mersan, Musa Serdar Celibi, Omer Bagci and Mr. Celik, the man who was supposed to help Mr. Agca escape. Mr. Agca is described as "a despicable mercenary" and a liar. Nevertheless, the core of his confession seems to have stood up under severe magisterial scrutiny.

'Agca Is Convincing'

"Every declaration of Agca's, every circumstance and detail, was checked and investigated," the report says. In the end, "Agca is convincing in his reconstruction of the crime."

Since Mr. Agca started to confess in May 1982, Bulgaria in particular has branded him a pawn in an imperialist plot against the Communist East, coached in prison by the Italian security services or the United States Central Intelligence Agency or both. Prosecutor Albano dismisses this as "archaic cold war propaganda."

"Nothing — I repeat, nothing — supports this theory," the Prosecutor adds. Speaking of the Italian security services, he says: "Agca had one sole meeting with the services, authorized in December 1981. He gave vague, uncertain and irrelevant replies to his visitors, who were utterly ignorant of the facts."

It was not until five months later that Mr. Agca "began spontaneously to collaborate with Italian justice." What follows is the State Prosecutor's description of the evidence found as the court's investigation proceeded. The narrative is based directly on his text, and the quoted matter is the language in his report. My own remarks appear in brackets.

Continued